

REMARKS

In response to the restriction requirement of September 23, 2009, Applicants hereby provisionally elect Group I, which is drawn to a process and is embodied by claims 12-17. The restriction requirement is respectfully traversed.

Initially, please note that the claims have been amended to correspond to the claims in the corresponding European Patent application. The claims have been amended to distinguish over the closest prior art (i.e. JP 2002 059186) in the EP application. Note that the claims in the EP application were not subject to an objection based on unity of invention.

By the above amendment, claims 12, 18 and 22 have been amended; and claims 17 and 20 have been cancelled. Support for the amendment to claim 12 can be found at least in original claim 6 and page 2, lines 18-19 of the specification as originally filed. Support for the amendment to claim 18 can be found at least in original claim 9, page 2, lines 18-19, page 3, line 24, and page 4, lines 15-20 (see also Fig. 2) of the specification as originally filed.

The method of claim 12 and the apparatus of claim 18 now clearly relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because they contain corresponding special technical features such as the outlet (4) of the chamber (6) being arranged tangentially to the chamber (6), and dissolved gas being supplied to the tank via the pipe (8) and the nozzle (10). Accordingly, the Examiner is requested to withdraw the restriction requirement in view of the amendments to claims 12 and 18.

Having made the required election, full examination on the merits of the elected Group is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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